

*Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act prohibits criminals convicted of a crime punishable by a 1-year prison term or more from purchasing or possessing a handgun*

Central Islip, NY – On Tuesday, Rep. Steve Israel (D – Huntington) and Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota announced new legislation to extend the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act to include violent juvenile offenders. The legislation would add violent juvenile offenders to the list of those ineligible to purchase or possess a handgun.

“Right now someone that commits a violent offense as a juvenile can turn 21 and go buy a handgun. When it comes to violent offenders buying guns, it needs to be ‘one strike, you’re out,’” said Rep. Israel. “Long Islanders are facing a spike in gang violence. They’re concerned about violent offenders in their neighborhoods or their children’s schools. I’m proud to be working with District Attorney Spota to keep our streets safe.”

"In my view the only question you should be asking is how come this loophole exists and why hasn't it been closed already?" said District Attorney Spota.

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 amends the Gun Control Act of 1968 to require background checks to be completed for all non-licensed individuals who seek to obtain firearms from licensed dealers. Under current law, individuals who have been convicted in any court of a crime punishable by more than one year in prison cannot own a firearm.

However, many juveniles who committed a violent crime when they were 17 years old or younger were sentenced as juveniles and therefore received a lenient sentence. If they had been tried as adults, these juveniles who committed violent crimes might have faced a year or more in prison and would thus be ineligible to own a firearm.

Under Rep. Israel’s legislation, the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act would be extended

to prohibit gun purchase and possession by someone 17 years or younger who is convicted of a violent offense that would have been punishable by a year or more in prison had the individual been tried as an adult.

According to the FBI, in 2006, juvenile offenders killed 1,255 people. Seventy-eight percent of the killings were committed with a firearm. Handgun purchasers with at least 1 prior misdemeanor conviction were more than 7 times as likely as those with no prior criminal history to be charged with a new offense after handgun purchase.

Rep. Israel is working with communities on Long Island to combat crime. He has met several times with the FBI to focus attention on gang hotspots. He is also working with community groups to expand opportunities and after school programming for youth.

Rep. Israel serves on the House Appropriations Committee.